

# Memorandum

**TO:** Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Job Placement Specialists  
**CC:** Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists, Kris Peterson  
**FROM:** Glenn Morton  
**DATE:** July 11, 2008  
**SUBJECT:** Meeting Announcement & Results of April 18, 2008 Meeting

The next informal meeting between court staff and certified vocational rehabilitation service providers is scheduled for Friday, July 25, 2008, at 2:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the court's administrative offices at 1221 "N" Street, Suite 402, in Lincoln (TierOne Center). Meetings are held on a quarterly basis, with the final meeting for this year scheduled for October 17, 2008.

The following are the results from the April 18, 2008 meeting. If you have questions or concerns about any of the discussions or decisions at this meeting please notify the court's Vocational Rehabilitation Section prior to the next meeting and they will be considered at that time.

**1. VR Rule Changes:** There was a brief discussion of the final proposed changes to Rules 37 and 44 which were to be considered at the court's public hearing on April 24, 2008. Those changes were subsequently adopted as proposed and became effective the date of the hearing. Rule 37 now provides that reports relating to a loss of earning power evaluation shall be sent to the court only if the counselor is also agreed to or appointed to provide vocational rehabilitation services. Rule 44 now provides that proposed rehabilitation plans shall be completed in accordance with the instructions provided on the plan form. Current copies of all court rules may be found on the court's web site at <[www.wcc.ne.gov/publications/rules.pdf](http://www.wcc.ne.gov/publications/rules.pdf)>.

**2. Completion of Reimbursement Forms:** It was announced that in order to comply with the state's auditing requirements the court's accounting staff has been returning reimbursement requests that are incomplete and/or incorrect. Therefore, compliance with the following is required by employees, vendors, and counselors in order to insure appropriate and timely payment.

- **Job Search Activity Log – Mileage Reimbursement Request:** The log needs to be completed and submitted to the court whether there is mileage reimbursement requested or not. The log must be fully and legibly completed with details of the contacts, including the complete address of the employer contacted and mileage when appropriate. The total number of miles traveled should be completed by the employee and verified by the counselor. That number should be transferred to the reimbursement request side of the form. Mileage amount should be calculated by the employee and verified by the counselor at the time signatures are placed on the form. A week consists of the seven calendar days beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. If mileage exceeds 345 in

any week an explanation must be included and the counselor must indicate approval of the exception.

- **Monthly Tutor Payment Form:** All columns in the table must be completed for each date of instruction. Ditto marks or vertical lines are acceptable where appropriate. The “Hour” columns should be totaled by the tutor and verified by the counselor. Payment can only be made for the number of hours per day and the number of days per week authorized. Any deviation needs an explanation and there is no guarantee that payment will be made beyond what has been authorized. Payment to the tutor is dependent upon receipt of the Instructor’s Monthly Progress Report.
- **Instructor’s Monthly Progress Report:** All columns on the Attendance Report must be completed for each day of instruction. Ditto marks and vertical lines are acceptable when the information is duplicated. This attendance record is compared to the tutor reimbursement request and/or the employee’s request for mileage and all must match.
- **Training Mileage Reimbursement Request:** The log must be fully and legibly completed for each trip (or round trip if so indicated). Mileage is paid for the most direct route from the residence to the training site. The number of miles to the same site should not vary from one trip to the next. If it does, an explanation is needed. The log should be completed with sufficient information to substantiate and explain each trip. Ditto marks and vertical lines are acceptable when information is duplicated. Care should be taken to claim reimbursement only for days training was actually attended. This and the total number of miles should be verified by the counselor. The total miles should be entered in the table and the actual mileage rate calculated by the employee and verified by the counselor.

**3. Data Collection:** There was a continuing discussion of possible ways in which additional data could be collected regarding the vocational rehabilitation program and the success of vocational rehabilitation plans. While it was again recognized that the Case Closure Form is not an ideal vehicle for this purpose, it was nevertheless agreed that the form could likely be improved to provide better data than is currently available. The court’s specialists will research the types of data collected on case closure by other vocational rehabilitation programs and companies, for further discussion at the next meeting.

**4. Job Placement Plans.** There was discussion of the counselor’s role in job placement and whether it is appropriate to use a job placement plan to rule it out as the appropriate priority. There appears to be some justification to attempting job placement in certain cases because the possibility of employment exists. The information learned during placement may, however, support the need for training. It was agreed that this should be disclosed in the placement plan justification.

There is no “one size fits all” for job placement. Each individual’s needs are different. There are a range of services that can be provided during job placement. They include, but are not limited to: weekly meetings; application completion; calling employers to develop leads;

looking for job leads; mock interviews; and accompanying the employee on interviews. Progress reports and Job Search Activity Logs need to reflect the services provided by the counselor and document the participation of the employee.

There was also a discussion regarding requests for extension of placement plans, and whether specific instructions or guidelines could be developed for approval of such extensions. However, it was recognized after further consideration that this would be very difficult given the variety of circumstances that arise. Rather, specific information regarding the activities during the initial plan should be provided, together with an explanation of the planned activities for the extension. The need for additional services must also be justified.

**5. Labor Market Information Resource:** A spreadsheet compilation of labor market information was presented by the court's specialists as a possible resource for counselors and others when researching such information. The response was very positive from those counselors in attendance, and the spreadsheet is now available on the court's web site at <[www.wcc.ne.gov/vocational\\_rehabilitation/labor\\_market\\_data.xls](http://www.wcc.ne.gov/vocational_rehabilitation/labor_market_data.xls)>. Information is included from the Nebraska Department of Labor/Nebraska Workforce Development, Office of Workforce Security, Labor Market Information Center and the Occupational Employment Statistics Unit.

**6. Next meeting agenda items.** At the next meeting on July 25, 2008 we will address the following as time permits:

- a. **ESL Classes:** Overview of discussions between the court staff and adult education representatives from the state Department of Education and community colleges on improving access to ESL classes.
- b. **Case Closure Form:** Continuing discussion of possible changes to the form, including a review of information collected by other vocational rehabilitation programs and nationwide companies on case closure.

**7. Future meeting agenda items.** The following topic will likely be addressed at future meetings. Any suggestions for additional agenda items are welcome.

- a. **LOE Training & Fact Sheet.** It was decided at the September 14, 2007 meeting that the court staff and counselors will partner in LOE evaluation training efforts and in development of a court "fact sheet" on LOE evaluations. The court's specialists will prepare a draft fact sheet for consideration at a future counselor/specialist meeting, and training efforts will be considered after development of the fact sheet.